

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, every spring I plant natural resource trees, over the past 2 months, nearly 600: crab apples, redbuds, oaks, cherries, dogwoods, cypress, and cedar, just to name a few. I also cut down trees, mostly stunted or overgrown pine, to make room for others to grow. I was raised to appreciate that kind of balance.

This spring I will join other volunteers in Habitat for Humanity, hammering and sawing lumber to build suitable housing for poor families in Louisiana. I was raised to understand that kind of balance, too.

Unfortunately, many of our bureaucrats do not. Every week nearly 1 square mile of Louisiana washes away in coastal marsh and barrier island erosion. Private landowners are prepared to spend their own money to save those marshes and wetlands, but our wetlands permit system says no. Hundreds of such applications have been abandoned.

The Corps of Engineers in Louisiana still refuses as yet to authorize a private mitigation bank. So 30 to 50 square miles in my State washes away while bureaucrats squabble over so-called wetlands that no self-respecting duck would land on.

We need to spend less money on lawyers and bureaucrats and more money really saving wetlands in America.

#### SUPPORT H.R. 3244

(Ms. NORTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the Capital of the United States is in serious disrepair, and I mean a lot more than potholes. It is trying to recover by downsizing a loan as no insolvent city has ever done. There is Federal responsibility here, including the unfunded pension liability that is taking 10 percent of our budget, and that is entirely my colleagues' responsibility.

The time has come to act now. We are a hemorrhaging population. We want to revive the District the old-fashioned way, by keeping and attracting middle-income residents here. Please support my Federal tax cut bill for the District of Columbia; support H.R. 3244. My colleagues should assume their share of the responsibility for the Capital of the United States.

#### TRAVEL AND TOURISM SHRINKS TRADE IMBALANCE

(Mr. ROTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTH. Mr. Speaker, did my colleagues see yesterday where the trade deficit is down by over 18 percent? Now that is something to cheer about.

But do my colleagues know why the trade deficit is down? According to the Commerce Department, it is because

the travel and tourist industry reported a temporary surge in foreign visitors to the United States. Unfortunately, this trend cannot continue unless we in Congress work right now to continue the trend by passing the Travel and Tourism Partnership Act.

Now we have 226 cosponsors. That is terrific. I want everyone to cosponsor this bill. We want to do even more, because terrific is not good enough when it comes to travel and tourism.

Travel and tourism is the largest industry in America. Travel and tourism employs one out of every nine working Americans, and it is time that we in Congress, and we are, awaken to the tremendous potential in this industry, and I ask everyone to help me.

Let us cosponsor this bill, and let us pass it so we can get our trade deficit down even further.

#### GIVE OUR STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK THEIR WAY THROUGH SCHOOL

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, one of the great arguments that I have heard in this debate about the minimum wage has been that there are many students who receive minimum wage. I stand here this morning as a product of the family of 13 children, parents who could not afford to send me to college, and the only way I could get through was to work.

I do not see anything wrong with trying to provide a wage that allows a student to be able to work their way through school particularly when we are cutting back in so many areas that affect and impact the lives of students who have been able to get scholarships, be able to get grants and loans. It seems to me that if we are going to be fair, we have to be fair to every American citizen, even those who are students who have a desire, a will, to work.

Mr. Speaker, my mother taught me how to cook, wash, iron, and sew. That is how I got through college. There are many other young people who could do the same thing if we were fair enough to them to give them that opportunity, give them the best wages. I have waited tables, I have bussed tables, I have shined shoes, I have done everything, and we ought to let them do it. Pay them a good enough salary so that we can indeed come to that point where maybe if we reduce the scholarships, they will know they can work their way through.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a good thing. I am a product and a witness of it.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE PARENTAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

(Mr. TIAHRT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Parental Freedom of Information Act to provide parents in America with the information they need to guide the education of their children. Teachers have told me that involved parents are the most important thing the public schools need to help students learn. Involved parents must be informed parents.

The Parental Freedom of Information Act will guarantee that parents have access to their child's curriculum, the contents and result of standardized tests and medical records, including psychiatric and/or counseling records.

Recently, parents have been denied access to instructional materials used in classes which they might find objectionable. They have been denied achievement tests that have been administered and then withheld from parental inspection, and treatments by unqualified school counselors have been administered to children contrary to the expressed objections of parents, and the records of this treatment were denied to the parents. Parents have been forced into the courtroom to find out what is going on in the classroom.

This act in no way seeks to influence curriculum or standardized tests. It simply provides the basic information which involved parents need to guide the education of their children.

#### RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE

(Mr. WYNN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WYNN. Mr. Speaker, good morning. The battle about the minimum wage rages on. Some people would have our colleagues believe that the minimum wage only affects kids, so we should not worry about it. Not true—10 million Americans are affected by the minimum wage. Some 75 percent of them are adults and 58 percent of them are women.

We need to increase the minimum wage. The minimum wage has not been increased in 5 years. The purchasing power of people who earn the minimum wage has decreased by 15 percent. We are talking about people who make about \$8,400 a year operating under the current minimum wage.

I am pleased to say today, Mr. Speaker, that there is some bipartisan support for increasing the minimum wage. I am distressed, however, that there are still some Republicans who believe that we should not increase the minimum wage and want to fight it.

We do not need any convoluted bureaucratic plans to pay employers. What we need is a very simple solution: Raise the minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, if we raise the minimum wage, we will bring 300,000 families out of poverty, we will bring 100,000 children out of poverty.

Raise the minimum wage.